

# SAFETY and IDENTITY

## STANDARD DETAILS

There are very real safety concerns where the Multi-Use Paths intersect with major streets. Traffic planners are resistant to adding new traffic lights for the path crossing, but they are taking pro-active steps to mitigate the crossing hazards. The arts can play an important role in augmenting strategies for traffic calming at dangerous crossings. Traffic engineers recognize the value of “differentness” as an effective way to slow traffic. The following concepts build on the strategy of layered warnings by suggesting customized markings and signs labeling canal crossings.



BANNER AND STREET SIGN CONCEPT

### RECOMMENDATION: INTRODUCE A THEME OF STREET SIGNS FOR THE CANALS

Each street crossing is an opportunity to identify and celebrate the canals. Similar to the street signs developed for distinct historic districts, specially-designed street signs will encourage residents to regard the Multi-Use Paths as a transportation option. Knowing the names and locations of the various canals will reinforce an understanding of the canal routes.

### RECOMMENDATION: INTRODUCE A THEME OF SPECIALTY BANNERS ATTACHED TO STREET SIGNS THAT IDENTIFY CANAL CROSSINGS

Colorful banners would add an element of celebration to the canal crossings and add another layer of warning to motorists. Imagery developed for the banners should relate to other graphics developed for crossings and pathways. Digitally-printed cloth banners have an estimated outdoor life of 3-5 years. New imagery can be generated for the crossings when the banners need to be replaced. A custom adaptation of the standard residential street sign can be developed as a part of the design of the banners.



CANAL SIGN CONCEPT



# SAFETY and IDENTITY

## STREET CROSSINGS

It is important that path users are mindful that they must yield to street traffic. Many of the canal crossings occur midblock. Pedestrians and cyclists will be crossing the streets without the aid of traffic signals or crosswalks. The City has already adopted a standard detail of signage at the crossings that will include a stop sign and the name of the street and path regulations.

The safety and character of street crossing could be enhanced by adding an artistic element to the path surface in advance of crossings. These graphic elements could be sandblasted into existing concrete or integrated into new paving by the use of either colored concrete or exposed aggregate.

***The safety and character of street crossing could be enhanced by adding an artistic element to the path surface.***



CROSSING AT MESA DRIVE

**RECOMMENDATION:** Commission an artist to develop a simple graphic for the Multi-Use Paths to be used at street crossings. The design layout could also include the option of a safe zone marking in the median refuge.

The commission would also involve research and development of the procedure that could eventually become a standard detail for Mesa's Canal Pathways. Color coordination and specifications for the economical production of templates would also be a part of this commission.

# SAFETY and IDENTITY

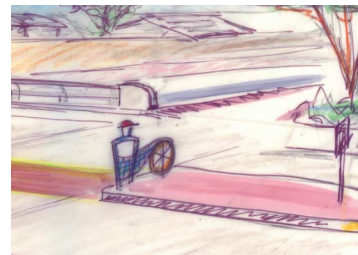
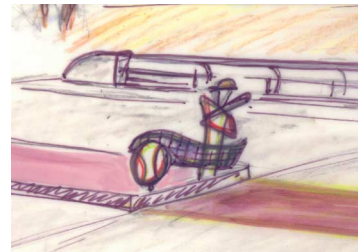
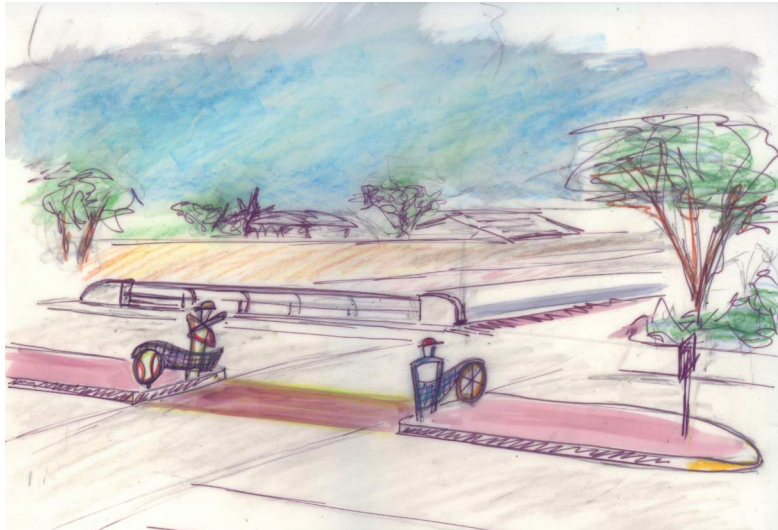
## SCULPTURAL MEDIAN GUARDS

City traffic engineers are responding to the safety issues associated with mid-block crossing on high traffic-volume streets. Raised median refuges have already been designed into many of the problematic areas. Introducing sculptural elements into the median refuge areas would add another layer of protection for pedestrians attempting to cross busy streets.

Median guards would have to meet several criteria to achieve the goal of increasing safety. Approval from the City of Mesa's Engineering and Transportation Divisions, and Public Art Program would be requisite before proceeding with implementation of this concept.

### MEDIAN GUARDS would have to:

- Have a breakaway base to minimize damage in the event of collision.
- Not obstruct visibility of motorists or pedestrians.
- Not become a distraction to drivers. These sculptural elements should be easily understood from a distance. If the elements are figurative in nature, they should not be so realistic or highly detailed as to require a double-take from drivers.



MEDIAN GUARD CONCEPT

### RECOMMENDED LOCATIONS FOR CROSSING GUARDS

Priority locations for crossing guards include major street/canal intersections.

#### Phase 1A:

Mesa Drive and the Crosscut Canal  
Horne and Consolidated Canal

#### Phase 1B:

Brown Road and Consolidated Canal  
Stapley Road and Consolidated Canal



# SAFETY and IDENTITY

## ADVANCE WARNING

### INTRODUCE A THEME OF SPECIALTY PAVING OR STRIPING IN ADVANCE OF CANAL CROSSINGS

The City has already installed fluorescent green trail crossing signs in advance of the intersections. A difference in the pavement leading up to the crossing zone will introduce visual and aural cues to caution motorists that they are entering a canal crossing zone. Every subtle layer that signals the existence of canal crossings helps to improve safety and awareness.



CANAL CROSSING AT BROWN ROAD

**RECOMMENDATION:** Commission an artist to work with the City Transportation Division to develop a distinctive graphic element that will achieve the goals of providing motorists with advance warning of the crossing and also reinforce the character and identity of Mesa's Canal Pathways. Specialty paving elements would be desirable because they would provide longevity and textural difference, however, thermoplastic painting would be desirable for economy and sustained color.

## BRIDGE DETAILS

Many of the canal bridges have recessed panels that could accept tile mosaic inserts. There are several bridge types, some with a wide, diamond-shaped recess and others with a large asymmetrical rectangular shape.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Commission an artist to design art elements for the recessed details in various concrete bridge abutments. The art elements should reinforce the identity of the Canal Pathways and the City of Mesa.



EXISTING CANAL GUARD RAIL



GETTING ART INTO THE PICTURE

# SAFETY and IDENTITY

## GATEWAY CROSSINGS

The canal crossings that are also gateways to Mesa offer an opportunity for art. Artworks at these locations should welcome motorists to Mesa and enhance the City identity. Gateway features similar to crossing guards could also improve the crossing safety and increase awareness of the Multi-Use Pathways.

**Every gateway is an opportunity to define MESA.**

- External gateways occur at the City limits.
- Internal gateways occur at neighborhoods and historic districts.

***Canal crossings that are also gateways to Mesa offer an opportunity for art.***



GATEWAY AT UNIVERSITY AND THE TEMPE CANAL



GATEWAY AT MAIN STREET AND THE TEMPE CANAL



GATEWAY AT BROADWAY AND THE TEMPE CANAL



# SAFETY and IDENTITY

## MESA MARKERS

Blank masonry screen walls exist at several gateway crossings. Many of these walls surround facilities linked to the mechanics of water management and distribution. The gateway walls would be prime candidates for murals that celebrate the canals and Mesa. Concepts for these gateways should be skillfully developed to present an identity that Mesa will embrace.

Many of these walls are owned and maintained by the Salt River Project. Proposals for these sites would have to be endorsed by SRP.

***This component of the program is designed to address resident education issues, cultivate interest in public art, and build a sense of identity and public pride.***

The concept of Mesa Markers was introduced in Mesa's original Art Master Plan developed by the Freeman/Whitehurst Group in 1998. The highly visible screen walls could function as MESA MARKERS:

*"This component of the program is designed to address resident education issues, cultivate interest in public art, and build a sense of identity and public pride. Public art projects are traditionally executed by artists working in three dimensions, but this component enables the art master plan to incorporate artists working in two dimensions, including graphic designers, into projects. It encourages the city and its artists to generate messages to the public about Mesa: they can be thought of as artfully-conceived public service announcements...(Mesa Markers could offer) an alternative series of historic or contemporary photographs, vintage postcards, etc."*

*imagine Mesa, pp 15-16*



MASONRY SCREEN WALL AT BROADWAY AND THE TEMPE CANAL

The Mesa Marker concept could capitalize on points of pride such as the new Mesa Arts Center, the Museum for Youth, and the Mesa Southwest Museum. The canal walls could be managed like billboards rather than permanent works.

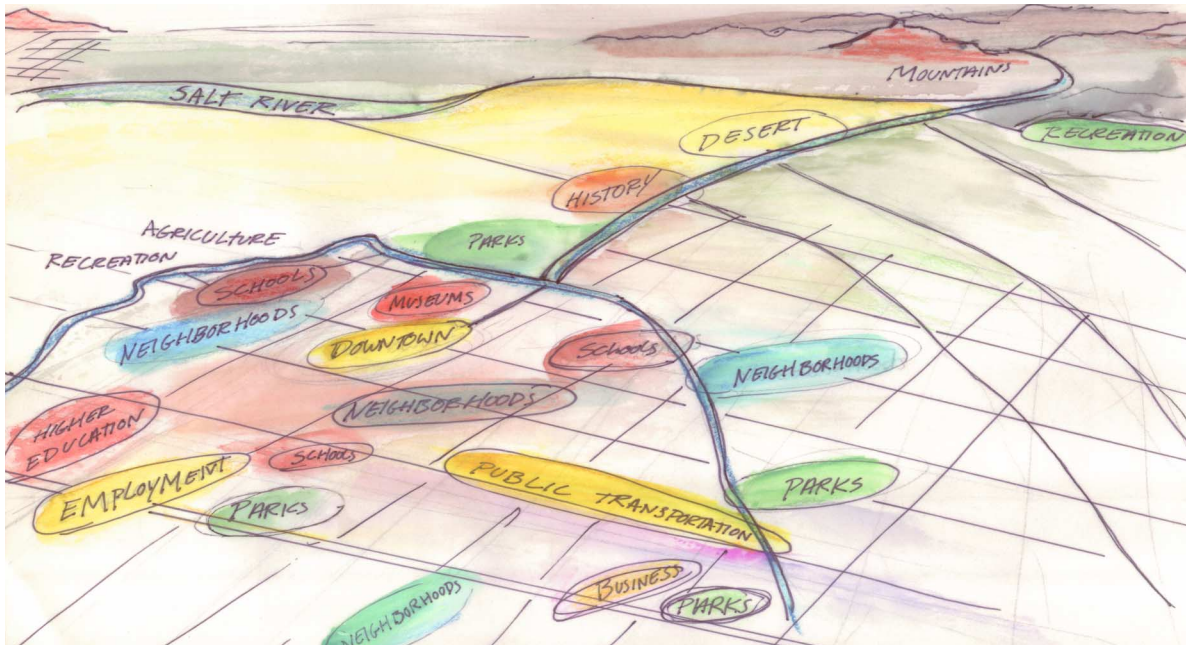
# WAYFINDING

Wayfinding is a term that is being used by designers and planners to identify design elements that help people understand where they are. The notion of wayfinding expands on the traditional system of maps and signs to include a wide range of design elements that orient people and provide interpretive information. Wayfinding elements could include: symbols, signs, maps, pavement markings, sculptural elements, or web pages.

Mesa's Multi-Use Path system will significantly improve the vitality of the City by providing linkages between

neighborhoods, schools, parks, recreational facilities, museums, and commercial destinations. The pathways can also provide a connection to the City's historical legacy, the canals, and the natural beauty of the desert. Art elements can help to make these valuable connections more legible. Interpretive cues at key places along the way can help to orient people and build a sense of place.

The Multi-Use Path system will provide important links between archaeological sites and museums. Artworks that draw on what is known of Hohokam history can build a sense of connection to the "ones that came before."



**RECOMMENDATION:** Commission a system of markings or wayfinding elements to link Mesa's archaeological sites and stimulate interest in the story of the Hohokam people. Wayfinding elements could be integrated into path pavement (through sandblasting, imprints, or insertions), integrated into signature sites, or be freestanding elements.

The mystique of the Hohokam civilization is heightened by the uncertainty surrounding their disappearance from the Valley around 1450 AD. The Pima, Salt River, and Tohono O'odham people have ancestral ties to the Hohokam. It would be highly desirable to commission artists of Native American descent or consult with storytellers or elders from these communities to develop these archaeological linkages.

## Archaeological destinations include:

- Park of the Canals
- Shepherders Park
- The Old Utah Canal
- Mesa Grande Ruins
- Mesa Southwest Museum
- Mesa Historical Museum





# SIGNATURE DESTINATIONS

There are many sites along the canal that could be developed as signature destinations. Public art can highlight the physical assets integral to the canal legacy and our continuing relationship to this life-sustaining infrastructure. Places with archaeological and historical significance could be identified and celebrated by site-responsive artworks that bring history alive and connect the past to the present.

Canal easements are owned by the federal government under the jurisdiction of the

Bureau of Reclamation. The Salt River Project (SRP) actively manages the canals and is responsible for continued water distribution to Valley cities. Its operations and maintenance requirements must always be protected. Proposed improvements to the canal banks need to be approved by SRP and the Bureau of Reclamation.

Other sites along the canal banks could be developed as places to connect with the legacy of water control in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Hydrological features such as weirs and gates provide a certain amount of visual interest on their own. “Placemaking” amenities can underscore the functional significance of these places and celebrate the historical irrigation techniques that we still employ. The following sites show past and present irrigation practices. These sites have considerable interest and could be developed as signature stops along the way. Locations of signature destinations are noted on Mesa map, page 41.



WATERFALL AT SOUTH-CON HYDROELECTRIC PLANT



# SIGNATURE DESTINATIONS

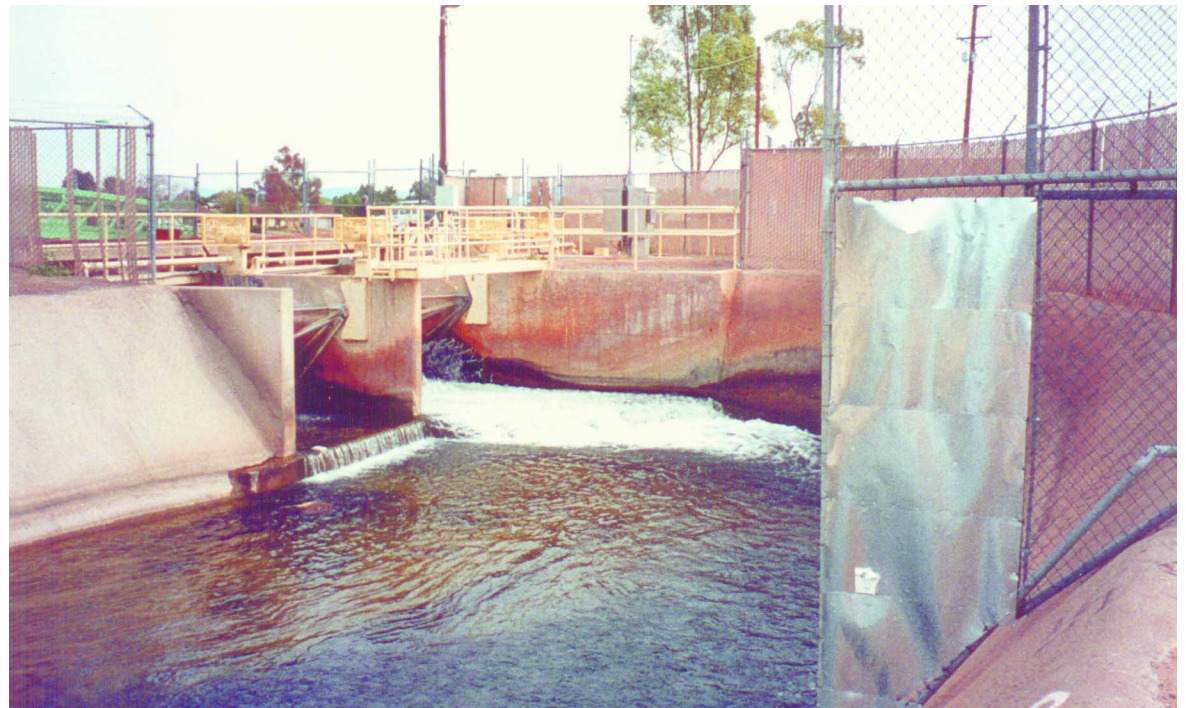
## SOUTH CANAL FOOTBRIDGE AND EAST-WEST SPLIT



BRIDGE CROSSING, CONSOLIDATED CANAL

There is an existing footbridge across the South Canal, just above the control point, where flow is split. The Consolidated Canal flows east from this point and the Tempe Canal flows west. This east-west diversion is significant as a present day hydrological feature that builds on the prehistoric Hohokam system.

**RECOMMENDATION:** This three-way intersection would be a good place for interpretation and wayfinding elements that can tell users how many miles to Park of the Canals, Granite Reef Dam, or Hohokam Stadium. It would also be desirable to work with SRP to modify existing screening to reveal the working diversion gates. The southwestern corner of the park could be developed as an informal rest stop with seating and shade.



RADIAL GATES AT EASTWEST SPLIT OF CONSOLIDATED CANAL



# SIGNATURE DESTINATIONS

## FOOTBRIDGE AT ORACLE



CONSOLIDATED CANAL AT ORACLE

The Oracle site is one of the rare places where a neighborhood street skirts the canal bank, providing a positive linkage between the Canal Pathway and the neighborhood. This power easement will also be the site of a future footbridge. This retention basin provides habitat for birds and small wildlife. At times, the retention basin is also a habitat for mosquitos to breed. Any plans to modify this basin should include a thoughtful solution for dissipating standing water.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Develop a site-integrated seating area that calls attention to the habitat and also engages the (future) bridge. Investigate the possibility of including art features that will attract more desirable bird species to this site and eliminate any standing water that could breed mosquitos. The Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Arizona Chapter of the Audubon Society may be helpful in developing the habitat potential for the site.



CONSOLIDATED CANAL AT ORACLE, AERIAL VIEW